

REMARKS

Claims 1, 2, 5-12 and 16-27 have been cancelled, claims 3, 4 and 13-15 have been amended to be independent form, and claims 28 and 29 have been added. In summary of the outstanding Office Action, claims 1, 2, 5-12 and 16-27 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,278,736 (De Haan) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,507,661 (Roy). Claims 3, 4 and 13-15 stand objected to as depending from a rejected base claim.

Reconsideration of the outstanding rejections and objections to the claims is respectfully requested in view of the present amendments and following remarks.

Rejections under 35 USC § 103(a)

Claims 1, 2, 5-12 and 16-27 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,278,736 (De Haan) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,507,661 (Roy).

Claims 1, 2, 5-12 and 16-27 have been cancelled without prejudice and applicants do not concede the propriety of the rejections to any of the cancelled claims. Due to the present cancellation of claims 1, 2, 5-12 and 16-27, withdrawal of the rejections of these claims is respectfully requested.

Objections to claims 3, 4 and 13-15

Claims 3, 4 and 13-15 stand objected to as depending from a rejected base claim. In the present amendment, claims 3, 4 and 13-15 have been re-written in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claims 28 and 29 have been added to cover the subject matter of claims 14 and 15 due to converting multiple dependent claims 14 and 15 into independent form. Claim 14 as amended and new claim 28 correspond to what was previously multiple dependent claim 14. Claim 15 as amended and new claim 29 correspond to what was previously multiple dependent claim 15. Therefore, withdrawal of the objections to claims 3, 4 and 13-15 is respectfully requested.

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PATENT

CONCLUSION

Applicants believe that the present reply is responsive to each point raised by the Examiner in the Office Action and Applicants submit that claims 3, 4, 13-15, and 28-29 of the application are in condition for allowance. Favorable consideration and passage to issue of the application at the Examiner's earliest convenience is earnestly solicited. However, should the Examiner find the claims as presented herein to not be allowable for any reason, Applicants' undersigned representative earnestly requests a telephone conference at (206) 332-1392 with both the Examiner and the Examiner's Supervisor to discuss the basis for the Examiner's rejection in light of the Applicant's amendments presented herein. Likewise, should the Examiner have any questions, comments, or suggestions that would expedite the prosecution of the present case to allowance, Applicants' undersigned representative would very much appreciate a telephone conference to discuss these issues. Acknowledgement of the drawings as formal is respectfully requested.

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